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ABSTRACT

It is widely assumed that empowerment represents the organizational transformation strategy to help schools fulfill a broad array of announced goals, such as academic excellence, economic prosperity, military security, and social equity. This paper directs a demystifying light on the rhetoric and rationality of organizational transformation theory as related to educational reform. Inspiration comes from both Charles Perrow and the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson. Demystification occurs when we place the poetical at the heart of transformation and push the "rational instruments of announced goals" to the periphery. Much theory and research focuses more on effective change characteristics than on the character of change. The study of organizational change has evolved across three streams of thought (organization development, strategic management, and organizational transformation) requiring different conceptions of "fit." To fit the OD experience, participants must value shared decision-making. Strategic management participants must value aggressive, risk-oriented decision-making. Organizational transformation involves a complete appraisal of the rules and the nature of the game. To fit this experience, participants must value and accept empowerment. Mainstream views of empowerment as a management practice, internal state, and organizational state are unidirectional, static, and manipulative and fail to support the construct's liberating values. The mainstream logic embedded in "Tomorrow's Schools" relies on several myths and the fit concept while seeking permanent solutions. The search for permanence tends to promote dominant power relations and resource exploitation. Authentic organizational transformation involves the passionate pursuit of obsolescence. (41 references) (MLH)

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Demystifying Organizational Transformation: A Poetical Look At Tomorrow's Schools

Symposium: School Reform and Organization Change:

Lessons from Theory and Practice

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
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DEMYSTIFYING ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION:
A POETICAL LOOK AT TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS

"Everything looks permanent until
its secret is known."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Introduction

We are dazzled by the events of the day. Poland, East Germany, the Soviet Union, China, Nicaraugua, South Africa, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania and Romania have left their foundations and dance before our eyes (1). Permanent and powerful political institutions and social organizations seem to have crumbled before the watchful lens of the television camera beamed around the world through the telecommunications satellite. We want to know how, why? We had grown so accustomed to the certainty of the wall whether built in Berlin or elsewhere. Over the years, we saw weeds in the wall spread broadly apart and struggling to survive. Minute and mysterious efforts to innovate, inspire and transform. The weeds reminded us no wall could permanently and securely obstruct daring thought and action. Now so many walls are apparently gone and we wonder if new inclosures or new vistas will be sought.

We seek through this paper a platform in which we may command a view of organizational life in schools. Many walls still remain. Weeds abound as well. In our daily work, we tend to repeat old steps and do not really believe in the power of change and reform. Now and then, we detect slight dislocations which remind us that political, social and economic systems are not fixed, but sliding. Each night, our televisions portray vivid images and individual illustrations of transformation from around the globe.

An unsettling thought haunts us---Does the Communist reformation mean that the American public school system is the world's last great experiment to distribute social and economic well-being to the masses through bureaucratic organization? Or is all this talk of global and educational transformation a mystification of reality?

Thirteen years ago, Charles Perrow chastised organizational theorists for their perpetuation, if not creation, of the image of the modern organization as a "rational instrument of announced goals" (2). Perrow asserted that a "demystified" view of organizations would see them as resources for the fulfillment of a variety of individual and group interests from within and without (3). Perrow suggested that an organization was, plainly and simply, an authorized time and space to legitimate the pursuit of individual and/or collective interest. He argued that the manager of the modern organization had three basic responsibilities: (a) resource exploitation; (b) behavioral conformity; and, (c) political stability. These three

responsibilities seem to be occupying a great deal of Mikhail Gorbachev's attention these days. Moreover, Perrow claimed that motivation and commitment could best be ascertained by asking the employee: "Can you be sure of having a job here as long as you need it?" (4). A question that many Soviets, many teacher and many professors have asked for many years. Perhaps the more transformative question is: Can your job help you to fulfill your needs and to provide the necessary challenge and support for growth?

Notions of rationality, empowerment, professionalism and transformation seem somewhat silly when exposed to Perrow's harsh light. Yet, these four notions dominate today's discourse on the nature, scope and direction of educational reform. Hundreds, if not thousands, of school restructuring efforts are taking place all across America. Virtually all of them espouse a rationality of change that centers on the concept of empowerment for educational professionals and their clients. Whether it be Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools or the Holmes Group Tomorrow's Schools project, empowerment is the central canon of educational reform as the nineties unfold. It is widely assumed that empowerment represents the organizational transformation strategy that will lead schools to the fulfillment of a broad array of announced goals (i.e., academic excellence, economic prosperity, military security and social equity).

Perhaps it is time to direct a demystifying light on the rhetoric and rationality of organizational transformation theory as it relates to educational reform. Primarily, we will focus on three questions:

- How is organizational transformation conceptualized in theory and research?
- What might we discover when we demystify organizational transformation theory and research and conduct a critical appraisal of the six principles outlined in Tomorrow's Schools?
- What happens after we demystify organizational transformation theory and research yet we remain committed to the pursuit of educational reform?

Clearly we owe a debt of gratitude to Charles Perrow for the inspiration to attempt to demystify organizational transformation theory. However, our intellectual and spiritual guidance comes from the poetry and wisdom of Ralph Waldo Emerson. We rely on Emerson because we value the poet. Poetry allows us to "rise into another idea" (5) and we partially accept Emerson's premise that: "The field cannot be well seen from within the field" (6). As we speak to each other through our academic journals and professional conferences, we sometimes get caught up in the rationality of our own sense of empowerment. In other words, we presume we are free to objectively observe organizational

phenomena even when it is of our own making. A poetical look at the transformation of today's schools for tomorrow may enable us to avoid some of the political pragmatism and rational mystification associated with educational reform and academic scholarship. Put simply, as we toil in the field we seek a poetical and not a political interpretation of the relationship between organizational transformation and educational reform.

What is a Poetical Look?

Just a few comments on what we mean by the phrase---a poetical look. Webster's Third (7) captures the essence fairly well. To be poetical is to look beyond or above the truth of history and nature. For example, the spurned lover is a common subject for the poet. Despite a bleak and painful transpersonal history, the spurned lover continues to seek a bond with the desired other. Despite the natural separation of economic status and class, two lovers seek a common world whether their names be Romeo and Juliet, Tony and Maria or Darcy and Elizabeth. A poetical look is not constrained by human classification. The record of human progress (i.e., history) and the stated state of the world (i.e., nature) often are cultural inventions that limit true love and high adventure. In other words, our conceptions of history and nature tend to inhibit what we believe we can be and what we can accomplish.

In fact, some observers of our post-modern world believe we have reached the end of history and nature. In a highly provocative and evocative article published in the summer 1989 issue of The National Interest, Francis Fukuyama argues we have reached the end of historical development. Invoking his interpretations of the theories of Friedrich Hegel, Fukuyama claims: "What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War but...the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (8). If such is the case, then we have reached the zenith of organizational transformation. Organization theorists might as well pack up their bags and move over to the logistical fields---economics, finance, marketing and accounting. The technical satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands seems to be the last academic domain for most of the social sciences. In such a dismal intellectual climate, a poetical look is desperately needed.

Not to be outdone or outdazzled by the political scientists, botanists and biologists have rung the death bell for nature as well. In the fall of 1989, bookstores heralded the arrival of Bill McKibben's book entitled: The End of Nature (9). The basic thesis of the McKibben book is that humans have gained control over the nature of nature. From genetic engineering to nuclear annihilation to environmental decay, humans have gotten the upper hand on nature. Either complete and rapid environmental destruction or rational global engineering is within our grasp.

Perhaps we have reached the apex of mystification as well. Fukuyama has taken us to the point where we see the Western liberal democracy as the "rational instrument of announced goals." McKibben removes us as a part of nature and takes us back to a pre-Copernican world where our technological wizardry and rational engineering places us at the center of the universe. In a Fukuyama and McKibben world, poets are an unnecessary and perhaps a dangerous luxury. Poets demystify the world not through the communication of new knowledge or new insights. All that poets say has been said before. Demystification takes place when we place the poetical at the center of transformation and push the "rational instruments of announced goals" (10) to the periphery. We sleep a bit better at night knowing the new president of Czechoslavakia is a poet. President Havel is attempting to transcend history and nature by asking his fellow citizens to reform themselves around a set of poetic principles. He is asking them to alter their whole way of life and not be so prompt to grab things for short-term economic desire. Emerson expressed the same poetical look nearly 150 years ago when he spoke before the Mechanics' Apprentices' Library Association in Boston, Massachusetts:

> "The duty that every man should assume his own vows, should call the institutions of society to account, and examine their fitness to him, gains in emphasis if we look at our modes of living. Is our housekeeping sacred and honorable? Does it raise and inspire us, or does it cripple us instead?" (11)

Demystification begins when we examine critically the principles upon which we build, run and transform our houses. Unfortunately, much theory and research on organizational transformation focuses more on the characteristics of effective change than on the character of change. In the perceived necessity to maintain and/or expand the organization it is presumed human beings (some of whom not yet born) and patterns of human living can be fit into a prescribed set of organizational activities. The political scientist, Michael Weinstein, suggests that organizations "attempt to control their human environment, first by merely committing their vast resources and thereby structuring options and opportunities, second by making hitherto unorganized groups dependent upon them for facilities, and third by providing self images for the people whom they are attempting to control" (12). Unlike the Emersonian notion that each individual should examine institutional fitness in reference to transpersonal principles, Weinstein's view of organizations highlights how and how well individuals fit institutional aims and processes. The history and the nature of the organization determines who will fit and who will not.

Fit to Rule

The concept of "fit" has been a dominant theme in organizational theory. Advocates of scientific management heralded organizations as machines and workers as definitive parts. These parts were made to fit through simplified, specialized task design and a prescribed style of management. "Goodness of fit" between worker and task would produce maximum efficiency. The shift in focus represented by the human relations school suggested that a happy worker would be a more productive worker. Advocates of the human relations approach strived to fit organizational climate to worker needs. Both the scientific management and human relations models linked the concept of fit with certainty and performance. Each model implied that a single best fit (either members to the organization or the organization to the members) would result in permanent productivity improvements.

After World War II, much more attention was placed on how and how well the organization fit with its internal and external environments. While stressing situational flexibility, contingency theorists still maintained that within a given situation, things must fit correctly. A single best fit exists for a specific situation. Contingency theorists generated a variety of important internal and external fits:

Organization and environment
Technology and structure
Leader and situation
Leadership style and followership predisposition
Worker qualities and job characteristics
Form and function
Strategy and action
Individual and organizational goals (idiographic and nomothetic)

Life in organizations is an ongoing process of fitting together human activity. All these proposed fits were and are assumed to be vitally important to organizational performance and permanence. When a bad fit is detected, organizational leaders leap into action using a broad but standard set of "fitness" regimens---change people, change behavior, change technology, change strategy, change working conditions, change markets, change market conditions, change structure, and/or change leadership. In business, all these strategies come down to one question: Who is fit to rule? Who is fit to rule the company? the industry? the market? the economy? In educational reform, these strategies also are applied and the central question remains: Who is fit to run the school? the school district? the educational market? the educational system? From this perspective, organizational transformation always is a matter of changes in who is fit to rule and/or changes in the rules about fitness.

Mainstream Perspectives on Organizational Change and Transformation

Researchers have described how different organizations confront change differently. Some organizations fight the prospect of change while others welcome it. Some allow external forces to change them. Some seek stability by managing change through rational planning. Some prompt change to avoid stagnation. Some see change as a way of life and accept the responsibility for continuous transformation. The study of organizational transformation and change has evolved across three streams of thought: Organization Development, Strategic Management and Organizational Transformation.

Organization Development (OD) is an organization-wide, planned change technique that relies on basic tenets of behavioral science. It usually is directed by a change agent who works with members of the organization in the identification of problems and the development of change interventions. OD is participation-oriented and it requires strong and long-term commitment from top management. Implementation takes time and results are seldom immediate.

OD confronts change through a democratic process. A key assumption of OD is that acceptance of and commitment to change will be most effective when members are highly involved. The process involves assessing and diagnosing the organization, implementing changes and monitoring results. Member involvement from the outset is intended to accomplish two things. First, it is assumed interventions are more likely to be accepted because participants will have a sense of ownership. Second, it is believed self-renewing change will be "institutionalized" because participants will "internalize" the OD process.

OD programs typically are described as having a sequential format (i.e., problem identification, facilitation of OD consultant, data collection and diagnosis, feedback, action planning, intervention). The main presupposition is organizations will be able to implement change successfully through a definitive, step-by-step democratic process (13).

School improvement programs, especially through the I.D.E.A. program, often are designed around OD principles and practices. The assumption is that with a little more talk and a bit more effort, specific but limited aspects of school performance can be improved. School improvement programs are highly goal-oriented and usually result in incremental and non-sustained change. Effective schools programs have some parallels with OD approaches (strong leadership, problem diagnosis, focus on climate and monitoring for results). Like the OD literature, research on effective schools tends to be descriptive of certain key characteristics the organization needs to display if it is to

improve performance in the short-term. Neither the OD nor the effective schools literature really provides deep insight on how to adapt to unplanned change.

Strategic Management is comprehensive and multi-dimensional. It provides a framework for dealing with planned and unplanned change both internal and external to the organization. Strategic management focuses on "developing and utilizing the strategy which is to guide the organization's operations"(14). The development of strategy typically involves an extensive analysis of conditions and projections about the future. The strategic management process usually involves a series of stages, steps or tasks which may be sequential but also are interrelated and interdependent (15). Generally, strategic management models include the formulation of organizational goals, an analysis of opportunities and risks, a review of strengths and weaknesses, consideration of environmental factors and some means for evaluating the results. This approach acknowledges the complex and dynamic fit between the organization and its environment.

Strategic management approaches have become quite popular at the school district level. Building-level applications are not as prominent. Many school districts use a strategic management effort as a way to identify resource needs and to secure community support for bond and/or levy campaigns. There is not much evidence to suggest district or building level school leaders have incorporated a strategic management orientation in their daily practices.

Organizational Transformation responds to and/or produces change through a paradigm shift within the organization. Transformation is distinguished from organizational change in that it often involves a "second-order" change. "First-order" change occurs within the organization's current frame of reference. It usually represents a continuation of direction and mission with incremental or partial adjustments. The view of the world from within the organization does not alter under a first-order change. When an organization transforms, it engages in "second-order" change where a shift in the organization's conceptual framework facilitates new ways of seeing and involves a shift in the nature and direction of the entire enterprise.

Transformation often is instigated by some sort of shock in the organizational system (16). The shock may take the form of a crisis or threat, new leadership, new opportunities, mergers and acquisitions, or uprisings inside the organization. Old assumptions are shaken loose, new ideas arise and a new perceptual framework becomes institutionalized and eventually is a candidate for another second-order change. Emerson provides a poetical look at this type of transformation:

"I unsettle all things. No facts are to me sacred; none are profane; I simply experiment, an endless seeker with no Past at my back....People wish to be settled; only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them" (17).

Schools and the educational reform movement have not really embarked on this form of organizational transformation. Formal education is viewed by many as the cultural invention in which people are to be "settled". Constant experimentation and transformation are not highly valued in a system designed to reproduce culture and to honor past roles, rules and relations. The conservative attitude about school experimentation and transformation seems a bit odd when one considers that human development is composed of unsettling shocks, crises, threats, new ideas and new ways of seeing the world.

Organization Development, Strategic Management, and Organizational Transformation are not mutually exclusive; organizations may and do use them in concert. For example, an OD diagnosis may be tied to a strategic management process designed to realign the direction and the structure of the organization. All three theoretical approaches are strongly grounded in the concept of fit. Organization Development is a highly democratic process with an underlying assumption that individuals will accept and commit to change only when they feel it fits their needs and concerns. To fit the OD experience, participants must value shared decision making. Strategic Management involves a prescribed action that demands member compliance to ensure success. To fit the Strategic Management experience, participants must value aggressive, risk-oriented decision making. Organizational Transformation requires a complete reappraisal of the rules as well as the nature of the game. Individuals in the organization are "empowered" to do the right thing and to seek new horizons. To fit the Organizational Transformation experience, participants must value and accept empowerment.

Unfortunately, the pursuit of good fits may lead to repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination (18). The concept of empowerment is highly problematic on this point. Organizational Transformation theory assumes individuals want autonomy and developmental opportunities in their work lives and that they want to be involved in workplace decisions. It is believed empowerment will enhance the individual worker's commitment to the organization and performance will rise. Empowerment has been described in the change literature as a technology for increasing productivity and as a plausible cure for an uncommitted workforce. While empowerment may have high moral appeal due to its supposed egalitarian premise, its use as a change technology smacks of contradiction. Viewed as a technology, empowerment is sold as a quick fix management technique to better fulfill announced goals. Viewed as a cure of lack of commitment, empowerment imposes the organization's will

on the individual. People who choose not to fully commit to the organization and its transformation can be seen as "unfit". The paradox between empowerment as a liberating experience and empowerment as a mystification of oppressive manipulation is perhaps the central dilemma in current theory and research on organizational transformation.

Demystifying Organizational Transformation

Why have the topics of organizational transformation, transformative leadership and employee empowerment so dominated the academic study of organizations over the last decade? One explanation is that these topics are the logical next steps in the evolution of organizational thought from scientific management to human relations to open systems theory. Another explanation is that white, middle-to-upper class males do not want to turn over the keys of the organization to the diversified workforce of the next century. White males still hold over 98% of the CEO positions in the country. Females and minorities will comprise 80% of new workers by the end of the decade. If organizations do not transform, then present relations of domination and authority will have to be changed (19). If female and minority workers are not "empowered" to accept the efficacy of the organization's existence, then leadership will have to be diversified. Why does the widely desired "empowerment personality" so closely resemble the classic portrait of the man in the gray flannel suit (i.e., aggressive commitment to organizational success; strong willingness to sacrifice personal satisfaction for organizational status; personal accountability for collective action)? Empowerment might be today's mystification strategy to perpetuate managerial authority over resource exploitation, behavioral conformity and political stability.

A number of apparent contradictions arise when contemplating empowerment in organizations. Some organizations are highly successful yet provide relatively disempowering experiences for their employees. Other organizations strive to create empowering settings yet employees may show little commitment to productive behavior in their jobs. Some individuals simply have little interest in becoming empowered in their workplace but are productive and active human beings in other contexts of their lives.

Such apparent contradictions generate a lot of questions. Does empowerment really liberate organizational life? What happens to individuals who do not come alive with talk of empowerment? How might personal context affect one's commitment to and participation in the organization? Is empowerment an imposition of those for whom it is not significant? Given the range of personal circumstance, how do managers deal with

diversity? What power and authority relations surface as organizations confront individual and multicultural diversity? Why do so many organizational transformation experiences seem so disempowering?

Such questions suggest empowerment must be demystified. Empowerment is not a rational, objective and morally pure organizational change strategy. Empowerment is not emancipation from repressive managerial authority. Empowerment is socialization. At the core of theory and research on empowerment and organizational transformation is the desire to enhance productivity and to secure greater employee commitment. A poetical and demystified look at empowerment in the organizational context suggests that managers believe the individual can only be transformed by showing her a new idea for improvement which commands her own (20).

Mainstream theory posits empowerment and transformation as fit-oriented constructs. The alignment of individual and organizational goals in pursuit of improved effectiveness is the primary socialization function of empowerment strategies. Empowerment has been linked to many components of organizational effectiveness. It has been studied as an important element in both leader and group effectiveness (21), as a means of facilitating the "positive" use of power (22), as a practice which promotes product quality, organizational flexibility/responsiveness (23), and as a way to attract and retain talented employees (24). School restructuring efforts such as site-based management, career ladders, enhanced teacher professionalism and parental choice all rely on the same empowerment-effectiveness connections.

It is widely advocated that organizational innovation, renewal and transformation are achieved through an empowered workforce. Many researchers contend organizations can achieve greater effectiveness, in fact phenomenal results, when members are able to realize their personal goals simultaneously as they work toward the goals of the organization. The mainstream logic of empowerment is direct and simple. It is assumed individuals want to grow and to be challenged in their work. Commitment and productivity rise when individuals are provided autonomy in the workplace (25). Individuals who participate in the change process have the right to decide how changes should take place which will make them more accepting of these changes. Individuals need to believe they are the shapers of their own destiny. High commitment is essential to organizational effectiveness. The bedrock assumption is that high involvement in power sharing leads to individual and organizational growth and improved effectiveness.

These assumptions are played out in the literature on organizational transformation and change. In particular, three usages of the concept of empowerment are evident in mainstream literature---empowerment as a management practice, empowerment as an internal condition and empowerment as an organizational state.

EMPOWERMENT AS A MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

From this perspective, empowerment is seen as something bestowed upon the members of the organization by management. For example, management may empower subordinates by delegating authority, pushing decisions down the organization or giving employees more task autonomy. Some researchers note that a range of managerial practices can be targeted toward positively changing conditions to foster feelings of empowerment (26) or to manage feelings of effectiveness within each member of the organization (27). The management of feelings of empowerment includes sharing power, exemplary supervisory behavior, verbal persuasion, supportive leadership and cultural values that stress self-determination (28).

The message is clear---management is still in control; the subordinate is still manipulated (supposedly for her own good). Beer (29) cites examples of failed empowerment strategies (such as quality circles) that have been forced on employees and implemented in disempowering ways. The "management practice" view of empowerment pays little attention to individual free choice, personal context and/or multicultural diversity.

EMPOWERMENT AS AN INTERNAL STATE

This view of empowerment is centered on the phenomenological meanings individuals make of their interactions with organizational life. Individuals are said to be empowered when they feel confident and in control of their environment (30), when they believe they have control over their own destiny (31), and/or when they sense the power and ability to accomplish their own desires (32). Macher (33) suggests an individual's sense of empowerment is generated not only by conditions in the organization but by internal characteristics as well. Some individuals are able to empower themselves despite disempowering structures, conditions and management practices.

EMPOWERMENT AS ORGANIZATIONAL STATE

Bennis and Nanus (34) see empowerment as rising from the creation of an organizational culture whereby individuals can develop a sense of meaning in their work and find the challenge and the success they seek. Empowerment is considered an act of cultural leadership. Waterman (35) cites many examples of successful organizations in which leaders "get out of the way" while members make decisions and generate innovations. Organizational success begets individual success and vice versa. Evered and Selman (36) use empowerment as descriptive of an

interplay between leadership action and internal individual belief. They argue leaders must coach rather than control followers in order to create an empowering context or climate which enables people to generate desired results. Under such a context, individuals become accountable for results and achievement of the results empowers them even more. Reciprocity develops across leadership, culture, the individual and organizational performance.

Mainstream views of empowerment as management practice, internal state and organizational state are unidirectional, static, manipulative and they fail to support the liberating values underlying the construct. We propose three arguments in favor of demystifying the mainstream perspective on empowerment. First, people bring to organizational life their personal texts and contexts and they make different interpretations to events and interactions in the workplace. Second, empowerment is a mutual rather than a unidirectional phenomenon. People influence and are influenced by each other. We perceive and assess each others' actions in context and we mutually construct meaning and appreciation. Third, since empowerment involves a mutual experience, it is emergent rather than programmed and it is more appropriately used as a descriptive term and not a prescriptive practice.

Demystifying Organizational Transformation, Empowerment and Tomorrow's Schools

Organizational transformation and empowerment are fundamental canons of the educational reform movement in America. They are particularly important in the reform rhetoric of the Holmes Group. Both the 1986 Holmes Group publication Tomorrow's Teachers (37) and the recently completed Tomorrow's Schools (38) call for profound changes in teacher education, the teaching profession and school organization. Teacher empowerment is a critical aspect of the Holmes agenda. In fact, empowerment is considered synonymous with professionalism and political legitimacy.

The latest Holmes endeavor Tomorrow's Schools rests on six principles, all of them somewhat connected to mainstream organizational theory perspectives on transformation and empowerment. The dominant metaphor of both Tomorrow's Teachers and Tomorrow's Schools is partnership. A "partnership of peers" based on a reciprocal, mutual exchange and benefit between research and practice, professor and practitioner, school and university. It is assumed that the teaching profession and even the schools can be saved through a mutual act of empowerment between colleges of education and school districts. The common espoused goal is to transform teacher education, teaching and schools.

Tomorrow's Schools strives to "invent a new institution"---the professional development school. A professional development school will encompass four primary functions: clinical preparation of student teachers, systematic inquiry on issues important to the school's practitioners and the university's researchers, the reformation of the school to better serve its students and community, and the ongoing professional development of the school's teachers and administrators.

Proponents lay out six principles around which a professional development school could be organized. Empowerment seems to be an essential premise of all six principles.

Principle One. Teaching and learning for understanding. All the school's students participate seriously in the kind of learning that allows you to go on learning for a lifetime. This may well require a radical revision of the school's curriculum and instruction. (Student Empowerment).

Principle Two. Creating a learning community. The ambitious kind of teaching and learning we hope for will take place in a sustained way for large numbers of children only if classrooms and schools are thoughtfully organized as communities of learning. (School Empowerment).

Principle Three. Teaching and learning for understanding for everybody's children. A major commitment of the Professional Development School will be overcoming the educational and social barriers raised by an unequal society. (Cultural Empowerment).

Principle Four. Continuing learning by teachers, teacher educators, and administrators. In the Professional Development School, adults are expected to go on learning, too. (Educator Empowerment).

Principle Five. Thoughtful, long-term inquiry into teaching and learning is essential to the professional lives of teachers, administrators, and teacher educators. The Professional Development School faculty working as partners will promote reflection and research on practice as a central aspect of the school. (Researcher Empowerment).

Principle Six. Inventing a new institution. The foregoing principles call for such profound changes that the Professional Development School will need to devise for itself a different kind of organizational structure, supported over time by enduring alliances of all the institutions with a stake in better professional preparation for school faculty. (Institutional Empowerment).

The mainstream logic of organizational transformation and empowerment embedded in Tomorrow's Schools seems to rely on several myths---rational change can be managed for announced goals, knowledge overcomes resistance, professional autonomy

means commitment to change, and interorganizational partnerships involve equal power sharing. Unfortunately, Perrow's call for demystifying organizations makes us wonder about the efficacy and integrity of these myths. Are Holmes-oriented colleges of education merely exploiting resources of selected school districts to promote their own organizational interests and to overcome their own political legitimacy deficits? Are university researchers empowering school practitioners so they better fit and better serve the performance expectations inherent to promotion and tenure criteria? Do teacher educators seek the enhancement of the teaching profession so their tenuous status in the university can be proportionally uplifted?

Tomorrow's Schools also relies significantly on the concept of fit. Better fits are sought between research and practice, teachers and teacher educators, school and university, teachers and students, teachers and administrators, and school and community. All these fits assume open, equal and just sharing of power, risk and accountability. Proponents claim the report represents a starting point for "conversations among university and school faculties embarked on a mutual endeavor" (39). Unfortunately, this self-declared and unidirectional act of empowerment has mandated and mystified the terms of the conversation. Once again, we rely on Emerson:

> Conversation is a game of circles....Good as is discourse, silence is better and shames it. The length of the discourse indicates the distance of thought betwixt the speaker and the hearer. If they were at a perfect understanding in any part, no words would be necessary thereon. If at one in all parts, no words would be suffered (40).

A poetical look at Tomorrow's Schools suggests the speaker's words may unintentionally disempower the intended hearer. Authentic conversation demands demystification. Authentic organizational transformation involves the passionate pursuit of obsolescence. The search for permanence tends to promote dominant power relations and resource exploitation. Real transformation, whether it is personal or organizational, involves a willingness to accept and perhaps even prompt obsolescence. Old habits, ideas, patterns of living, structures, strategies, technologies, systems, and conversations must fall away as we rise into a new world. The free flow of thought eventually brings down all institutional truths. The educational bureaucracy is showing advanced signs of sclerosis. Adaptation and obsolescence are inevitable.

What happens when we demystify organizational transformation theory and research and yet remain committed to the pursuit of educational reform? We celebrate obsolescence.

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